

January 22, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

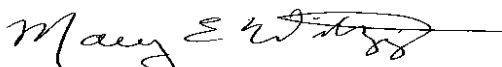
As the program director for a crisis and suicide hotline, which has been a member of both the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) as well as the Hopeline Network managed by KBHC, **I strongly encourage you to grant SAMHSA's request for permanent reassignment of 1-800-SUICIDE to SAMHSA.** For the past year we have greatly benefited from the FCC's decision to temporarily assign 1-800-SUICIDE to SAMHSA; at the time of that decision, 1-800-SUICIDE was seamlessly rolled into NSPL, which is under SAMHSA control and managed by the non-profit organization, Link2Health Solutions.

In the first month following the reassignment, we became aware of two important facts. First, our call volume coming through the NSPL nearly tripled while our total call volume remained fairly steady, meaning the increase could largely be attributed to calls from 1-800-SUICIDE. We receive monthly call statistics from the NSPL, something we never received from the Hopeline/KBHC so this was the first time we became aware of the large volume of calls we receive through 1-800-SUICIDE: over 500 in that month! Second, our crisis calls were coming from more local areas where we had a better handle on the resources available to help them. Previously with 1-800-SUICIDE being managed by KBHC, we received calls from all over the United States. Through the NSPL, we only receive calls from those areas where we have adequate knowledge of human services and comprehensive knowledge on how to initiate emergency protocols when needed. **Bottom line: After the reassignment of 1-800-SUICIDE to SAMHSA we were confident that we had the capacity to best serve all of our callers.**

The collaboration between SAMHSA and Link2Health Solutions has provided incredible leadership and support for call centers within the network. Callers to 1-800-SUICIDE now benefit from the research- and call center-backed requirements and ongoing improvements for quality assurance initiated by the NSPL. After taking so many strides forward, it would be a shame to go back, in part, to the old ways of doing business. Ultimately, that would inhibit our ability to best serve callers to the 1-800-SUICIDE number, so **I again urge you to make the reassignment of 1-800-SUICIDE to SAMHSA permanent.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary E. White", followed by a horizontal line.

Mary E. Witzig
Program Director, Crisis & Suicide Hotline
CONTACT Pittsburgh